



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District

The Corps' pondent

a newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the residents of Spring Valley

December 2001

Soil sampling continues, cleanup options discussed

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

We continue to conduct area-wide soil sampling across the Spring Valley community. As of Dec. 11, we have completed sampling for arsenic at approximately 1,194 of the 1,525 residential and non-residential properties within the project boundary. Of these, roughly 12.5 percent or about 140 properties require more detailed follow-on grid sampling.

So far, we have grid sampled 63 of these properties. We have received grid-sampling results for several dozen properties. We are currently evaluating properties with exceptionally elevated grid sampling results.

At this time we have identified a handful of properties, most of which are in the Fort Gaines area, at which we plan to expedite that cleanup under a Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA). A TCRA allows us to initiate the work in a much shorter timeframe than typically possible. The number of properties to be remediated under a TCRA and the timeframe for completing the cleanup has not been determined.

However, in mid-December we met with a small group of the residents who will be affected by the TCRA work to explain what will happen and address questions.

We are also working with the

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to expedite an exposure investigation of residents living at these properties.

In other sampling activities, we continue to work on gaining permission to Friendship (Turtle) Park located in the AU Park neighborhood. The D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation has been reviewing the right of entry document since mid-November. Once this document is signed, we plan to sample the park.

Cleanup options

As we move forward with the grid sampling, we continue to discuss with our partners, the EPA and D.C. Department of Health, as well as with the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), several remediation options to address those properties with elevated arsenic levels.

We have prepared three options, with each representing a different approach to developing a site-wide remediation goal. It was requested at the September RAB meeting, that the Corps solicit feedback on these options from EPA and D.C. Health and then present this information at the November RAB meeting. In response to their review of these options, the two agencies developed a fourth option. All have been presented to the RAB and the D.C. Mayor's Spring Valley

Scientific Advisory Panel.

The four cleanup goal options under consideration are as follows:

- **Option one** is hazard-based or risk-based that uses EPA's hazard index system to identify the arsenic level that represents a hazard index greater than one, reflecting a potential long-term risk for non-cancer health effects. This would be equivalent to arsenic concentrations greater than 23.5 parts-per-million (ppm) in a particular grid.

- **Option two** considers the first option in light of the fact that arsenic binds tightly to soil and, in turn, poses a lesser risk if ingested. In other words, our worst-case bioavailability data suggest that 50 percent or less of the arsenic in the soil would be available for absorption into the body if ingested. This doubles the allowable arsenic concentrations presented in the first option. This would pertain to arsenic concentrations greater than 47 ppm in a particular grid.

- **Option three** proposes an "across the board" cleanup level for all grids exceeding the high end of background. This is equivalent to arsenic concentrations greater than 20 ppm in a particular grid and involves the top two feet of soil. This option is the most protective, but it also increases the number of properties to be affected by cleanup activities.

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Department of the Army
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District
P.O. Box 1715
Baltimore, MD 21203-1715

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Sampling continued

• **Option four** is a slightly modified version of option three. All grids greater than 20 ppm would be considered for cleanup but the depth of the cleanup would not be limited to two feet.

These options have also been discussed with the Department of the Army. Based on the arsenic levels that we've identified to date, this project is not likely to see an increase in federal funding to expedite the cleanup. Given this, the cleanup of the Spring Valley project site is likely to take between five and ten years, regardless of which of the four cleanup options is implemented.

In other news from the mayor's scientific panel Dec. 7, the D.C. Department of Health presented to the panel the results of a revised cancer/morbidity study the agency recently completed using a new control population from

Potomac, Md. D.C. Health basically found the same results as it did in a similar study conducted last spring.

It found that Spring Valley residents do not show a significant increase in cancer rates. In most cancers investigated, cancer rates in Spring Valley were actually lower than in Potomac neighborhoods. If you have any questions about this study, you should contact the D.C. Department of Health at 202-535-2289.

Elsewhere in Spring Valley, we continue our excavation of the burial pit at 4825 Glenbrook Road.

Since May, workers have safely removed ordnance items and glass bottles. A majority of the ordnance items have been recovered in the last three weeks. Experts continue to assess these items. So far, all of the items have been unfused and unfired; most are scrap, meaning they contain no explosives and

no chemicals. As has been reported to the community for many months, 22 of the bottles found to date have contained chemical agents (lewisite or mustard) or their breakdown products.

For more information on project activities, we encourage residents to visit our Spring Valley website at:

<http://www.nab.usace.army.mil>

Those wishing to review validated arsenic sampling results from properties within the community should visit the public documents repository at the Palisades Library, 49th and V Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. For library hours, please call 202-282-3139.

If you have questions about Corps activities in the neighborhood, please call our toll-free information line at 1-800-434-0988.

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Baltimore Commander & District Engineer Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr.
Deputy District Engineer, Spring Valley Maj. Michael Peloquin
Public Affairs Chief Lucy Lather
Public Affairs Specialist Doug Garman